NC Capitol Connection

MARCH 2015
VOL. 7, NO. 3

Inside

Conservative Leadership Conference
— p. 4-5 —

Teaming Up to Engage Believers in NC

BY CIVITAS STAFF

Can Christians in North Carolina have an impact on today's culture and politics? The answer is an emphatic "yes!" – if believers team up to help inspire a spiritual and cultural awakening.

A key tool in that effort are Culture Impact Teams (CITs), which are already at work here in North Carolina.

Many people of faith surely agree something is needed to reverse social decline.

"I do think there's a sense of a declining culture," said Dr. Mark Harris, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, who has been a leader in the fight for the state's marriage amendment. "There's a sense we have fewer moral absolutes. There's a sense we face much more moral relativism. There's a concern about a vacuum of leadership."

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At a Civitas Town Hall at First Baptist Church in Charlotte in January, the Rev. Mark Harris (right) introduced Civitas President Francis De Luca (left) and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

Getting to the Core of the NC Left

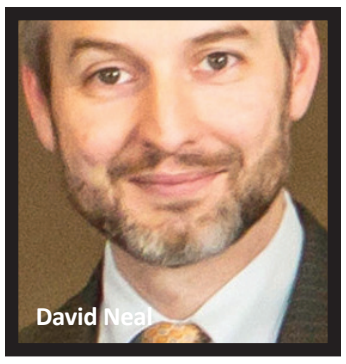
BY SUSAN MYRICK

It can be very difficult to grasp or visualize the vastness of the network of left-wing groups in North Carolina. But one way to start is with the most important group on the Left, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation – and the family that dominates it. Our research has confirmed that the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation has changed radically from its inception as a tribute to Zachary Smith Reynolds, the son of R.J. Reynolds.

Once it was one of North Carolina's oldest and most well-regarded philanthropic foundations, known for building schools and hospitals all across our state. But in the latter half of the 20th century, it morphed into a radical activist organization that leads the charge for public policy that will grow government, increase regulation and weaken the family.

The foundation's board members have connections to various left-wing organizations, making it not only a microcosm of the liberal/Left in our state, but an integral part of the national progressive movement. And, this is why we created Mapping the Left, www.mappingtheleft.com – to make it easier to visualize the groups and the activists in the vast network of liberal groups in North Carolina. Our challenge in the Mapping the Left project is to illustrate these connections, and where better to begin than with the members of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation board of trustees: They were, and are, unquestionably the most important single force behind the liberal/progressive movement in North Carolina.

Let's start with an individual at the core of this



group and its drive to reshape North Carolina: David Neal, a member of the Reynolds family and the founder of Blueprint NC – the organization that rallied the Left in North Carolina to "eviscerate, litigate, mitigate, cogitate and agitate" the state's leaders.

Neal calls himself an "accidental philanthropist," but a look at his resume suggests otherwise. Although Neal is not a direct descendant of R.J. Reynolds or the Z. Smith Reynolds family, he is part of the family. His great-great-grandmother, Mary Joyce Reynolds, was R.J. Reynolds' sister. Neal is the immediate past president of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's board of trustees (2010-2014) and has been a board member since 2001.

His life is interwoven with liberal causes and organizations. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1995, Neal served as a volunteer in the Peace Corps in the for-

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Civitas Institute
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Vol. 7, No. 3

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From the Editor

UNC Center Has Only Poor Alibis

BY JIM TYNEN

The wailing and whining following the closing of a University of North Carolina-based center reveal why the closing was badly needed.

John Fennebresque, chairman of the Board of Governors of the UNC System, in the News & Observer wrote: "Over the last five months, a committee of our board reviewed all 240 centers associated with the university system in an open and transparent process. We applied the same fact-based criteria to each center to evaluate the cost, financial sustainability, interdisciplinary reach and value to UNC."

The board closed three centers. Three.

Pick any 240 enterprises, and a bigger percentage will flop. Eight of 10 new businesses will fail in the first 18 months. The board closed one of 80.

Yet the action raised a clamor, with the loudest coming from the UNC Center on Poverty, Work & Opportunity at the School of Law.

"The members of the Board of Governors have demonstrated unfitness for their high office," Poverty Center head and UNC law professor Gene Nichol harrumphed in the N&O. "Their actions represent a profound, partisan, and breathtakingly shortsighted abuse of power."

But it's the Poverty Center that has abused its status.

"After careful review of the Center on Poverty – which included an opportunity for the center director to fully describe its work – the board concluded the center was unable to demonstrate any appreciable impact on the issue of poverty," Fennebresque wrote.

To see for yourself, look at the center's website. It has a shortage of original publications, especially in recent years. Nor does it unveil any significant cases in which it reduced poverty. If there were any, rest assured the center's friends in the media would have trumpeted the news.

Moreover, the Poverty Center is at best a distraction from the university's mission of educating students.

Consider Nichol himself. He makes more than $200,000 a year at UNC – for teaching one law course per semester. That's not much work, though, admittedly, he has at least kept himself out of poverty.

Is that the best way to further the university's mission? Nichol reportedly is a good teacher. Yet he seems to spend much of his time not teaching but furthering the agenda of liberal groups, and using the good name of UNC to do so. And, in the Tar Heel State, that name is of immense value.



UNC Professor Gene Nichol at the 'Moral March' in 2014 in Raleigh.

But what is most disturbing is the mindset this kerfuffle has revealed. The Left is outraged that representatives of the people dare to question an institution the people pay for. The nerve!

Take one typical remark from the N&O's online comments, because it summarizes so much of the Left's attitude: "I grew up in communism. It is not hard for me to recognize political repression. Closing [these] three centers is without a doubt political repression."

Think of that: The public's representatives ask a publicly supported enterprise to justify its existence. The enterprise fails to do so. Public support is withdrawn. That's communism! That's repression!

The real likeness to communism is the belief that such a government-sponsored institution is beyond criticism or control. In other words, the people of North Carolina must never dare question something their tax dollars sustain, or something that supports our betters in the campus aristocracy.

Of course, history shows that, where public institutions are immune to review or revision, repression is truly a danger.

The truth is that, in a land of freedom, government-sponsored entities must undergo thorough scrutiny at all times. When those entities go off the rails or outlive their usefulness, they must be reined in or shuttered. Freedom can exist only when the people exert control over the institutions that act in their name.

In North Carolina, the UNC Board of Governors has taken a small step to restoring that vital authority. More such steps should follow. ■

NC Capitol Connection

PUBLISHER
Francis X. De Luca
francis.deluca@nccivitas.org

MANAGING EDITOR
Jim Tynen
jim.tynen@nccivitas.org

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Tiffany Taylor

Editorial & Advertising
100 S. Harrington St. Raleigh, NC 27603
phone: 919.834.2099 | *fax:* 919.834.2350

NC Capitol Connection is a publication of the Civitas Institute

CIVITAS INSTITUTE

The Civitas Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to advancing conservative and free-market principles in the state of North Carolina.

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Bill Would Hit NC with $1.2B in Gas Taxes

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

Significantly lower gas prices at the pump the past several months have put more money in the pockets of North Carolina motorists. However, because of the adjustable portion of the state gas tax, lower gas prices also mean less money to state government coffers. Apparently, some state legislators can't accept that.

Senate Bill 20, IRC Update/Motor Fuel Tax Changes, sponsored by Sens. Bill Rabon (R-Brunswick), Bob Rucho (R-Mecklenburg) and Jerry Tillman (R-Moore), would alter the state's gas tax formula, with the net impact over the next four years costing North Carolinians an additional $1.2 billion in taxes.

North Carolina's state gas tax is comprised of two portions: a specific set amount combined with an adjustable amount that varies according to the average price of gasoline. As gas prices rise so too does the adjustable portion of the gas tax, increasing the overall state gas tax. And vice versa when gas prices drop. The variable portion is adjusted every six months based upon the average gas prices of the previous period.

Due to the low gas prices of the last several months, therefore, the state gas tax is expected to drop by 6 to 8 cents per gallon in July,



the next time the tax will be adjusted. But instead, SB 20 would set the gas tax at 35 cents per gallon as of March 1 and establish that amount as the floor for the tax. No matter how low gas prices drop, the tax would not be allowed to drop below 35 cents, according to SB 20.

Currently, the state gas tax is at 37 cents, so the immediate impact will be a 2-cent reduction, but that will be short-lived. Recall that under current law, the gas tax is projected to drop perhaps below 30 cents per gallon, but under SB 20 it would be stuck at the higher 35-cent rate.

Forecasts by legislative economists and Department of Transportation (DOT) officials project that the new gas tax floor would result in $1.2 billion more in taxes over the next four years compared with what tax rates would be under current law.

SB 20 also mandates that DOT eliminate 500 filled, full-time positions and a minimum of 50 vacant positions in order to achieve cost savings.

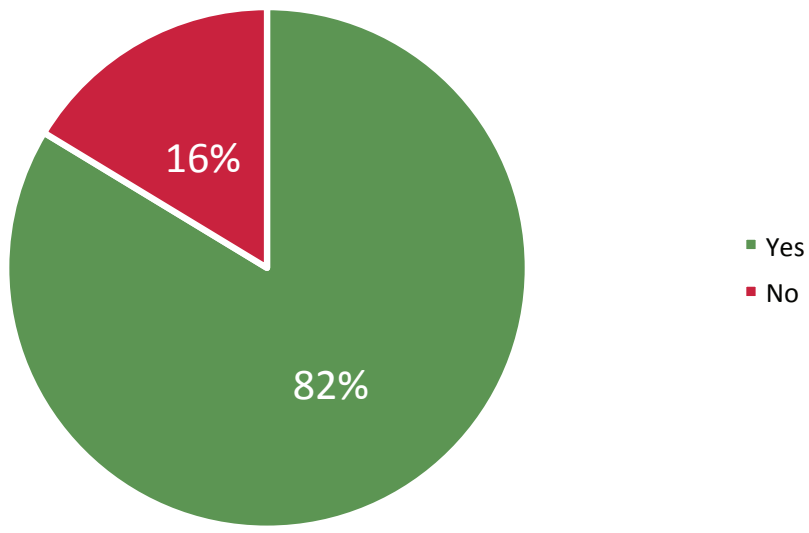
The gas tax provisions are inexplicably combined with other, unrelated tax provisions in SB 20. The other tax provisions focus on compliance with technical changes to the federal tax code. There is little justification for combining the unrelated provisions into one bill. A far better option would be to split them up and allow a vote on the different provisions as stand-alone bills.

Because it would result in a massive tax hike of $1.2 billion over four years on North Carolina motorists and it combines unrelated tax changes that should be voted on in separate bills, SB 20 has been named a Civitas Bad Bill of the Week. ■

Civitas Poll

The most recent Civitas Poll asked, "Do you believe people in North Carolina should be required to prove their U.S. citizenship when they attempt to register to vote?" An overwhelming 82 percent said "yes," and 16 percent said "no." This poll of 600 registered voters in North Carolina was conducted Feb. 24-26, 2015 by National Research, Inc., of Holmdel, NJ

Do you believe people in North Carolina should be required to prove their U.S. citizenship when they attempt to register to vote?



Monthly Petition

NC Voter Petition
to
Oppose Medicaid Expansion

Medicaid expansion would push hundreds of thousands of additional North Carolinians into an already overcrowded government program, featuring far too many patients chasing too few doctors. In the case of Medicaid, coverage does not equal access to care. Expanding Medicaid would also strain the state budget while increasing the national debt, and prioritize childless, working age adults over low-income children and pregnant women.

Let your elected officials know that Medicaid expansion imposes an unaffordable price tag on taxpayers while not improving access to care for low-income people.

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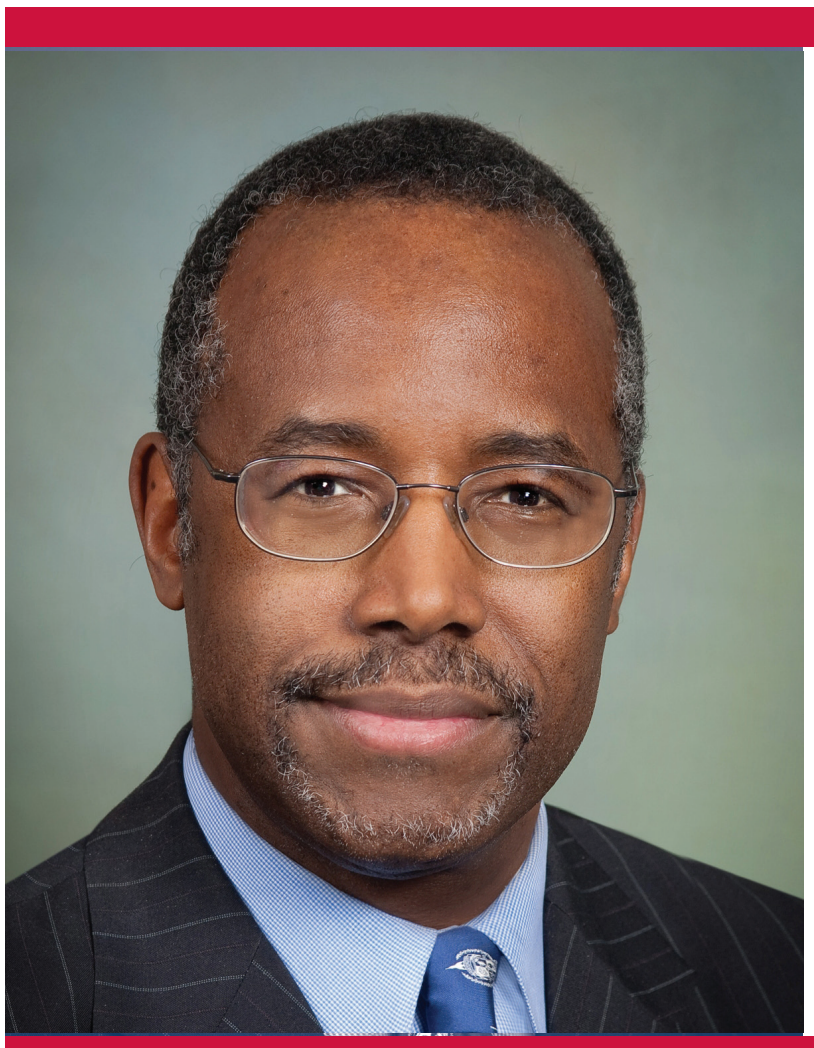
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2015 CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



Dr. Ben Carson

will deliver the keynote address
Friday evening, March 27

Embassy Suites, Cary/RTP, NC

Go to civitasclc.com to learn more about CLC 2015, March 27 & 28!

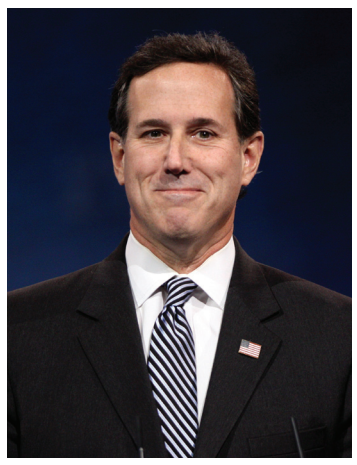
THEY'RE ATTENDING CLC 2015...ARE YOU?



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CLC Will Offer an Early Glimpse at ’16 Landscape

BY CIVITAS STAFF

The Conservative Leadership Conference (www.civitasclc.com) on March 27-28 will provide vital insights on the political landscape even as White House hopefuls are testing the waters.

One prominent name on the scene is Dr. Ben Carson, who will give the keynote address on Friday night, March 27, at CLC. The retired neurosurgeon’s stirring speeches and inspiring life story have won him a host of admirers whose “Run, Ben, Run!” mantra has been everywhere in today’s political landscape.

Dr. Carson finished second in Public Policy Polling’s recent poll of possible GOP contenders. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker finished first, but Carson was second, ahead of well-known figures such as Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee, Rand Paul and Ted Cruz.

According to PPP, “One thing that continues to be interesting is that among Tea Party voters Ben Carson is really stealing Ted Cruz and Rand Paul’s thunder. Carson’s favorability with them is 80/3, compared to 70/3 for Cruz and 60/13 for Paul.”

Recently Dr. Carson announced the formation of a presidential exploratory committee to study a White House bid.

“Career politicians simply don’t understand the disappointment, anger, and pain in real America,” he said in a video in which the effort was unveiled.

Another CLC speaker, Carly Fiorina, is drawing respectful attention on the political trail.

Pundit Scott Conroy with the influential Real Clear Politics website wrote about her appearances in the key primary state of New Hampshire.

“Recent conversations with plugged-in Republicans across [New Hampshire] reveal a consensus that Carly Fiorina—the former Hewlett-Packard CEO—is positioning herself well as a potential dark horse White House contender capable of making a serious run.”

For instance, “I think that she could be the real wild card in this thing, and I’m very impressed by her,” said Jim Adams, a lifelong resident of the Granite State who is now chairman of the Granite State Taxpayers Association.

Mrs. Fiorina too has an inspiring story, starting her working life as a secretary at a small business and rising to become the first woman to head a Fortune 50 business. In politics, she took on the tough job of running for the U.S. Senate as a Republican in California. Though she didn’t win, she earned more votes than any Republican nationwide that election cycle. On the campaign trail, she became known for her proud adherence to conservative ideals and her mastery of the issues.

Former U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint is also on the schedule for CLC this year, as he was two years ago. At CLC 2013, as he was in the process of becoming the president of the Heritage Foundation, he impressed CLC attendees with his impassioned call for conservatives to continue to fight for freedom.

DeMint has said that a primary goal for Heritage is to help the conservative movement understand how Americans from all walks of life perceive public policy issues — and to better communicate conservative ideas and solutions.

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest can be expected to provide both a close-up look at North Carolina today along with an eloquent affirmation of freedom, as he has at the previous two CLCs. For instance, last year, in calling for “a better America,” he said, “If you’re on welfare, you can’t be free. If you get food stamps, you can’t be free. … If you rely on Uncle Sam for the next job or check, you can’t be free.”

CLC will also feature Ann McElhinney, director and producer of “FrackNation – A Journalist’s Search for the Fracking Truth,” in which she highlighted the truth about the natural gas boom in the U.S. and abroad.

“FrackNation” premiered on Jan. 22, 2013 on Mark Cuban’s AXS TV and was later picked up for distribution by Magnolia Pictures. The New York Times called the film “meticulously researched… provocative.” Variety said it was a “briskly paced…mischievous pic.”

Matt Kibbe will also bring his bold take on politics to CLC. Kibbe is the President and CEO of FreedomWorks, a national grassroots organization that serves citizens in their fight for more individual freedom and less government control.

Another highly anticipated speaker is John Fund, national-affairs columnist for National Review who is also known for writing for *The Wall Street Journal* for more than two decades. He is a leading expert on legal and election issues.

Also joining us will be Deneen Borelli, outreach director with FreedomWorks. She’s a contributor with Fox News and has appeared on “Hannity,” “The O’Reilly Factor,” and “Fox & Friends.”

In addition to these and other speakers, breakout sessions will educate and inspire attendees. Topics will include Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act; how to use Twitter effectively; Civitas’ Mapping the Left project and why an Article 5 Convention of the States can rein in the federal government. ■



At CLC in 2014, hundreds of attendees heard from top conservative leaders.

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Teaming Up to Engage Believers in NC

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Mark Harris

This requires a response from people of faith. "The church recognizes the extensive role believers have to be salt and light," he said. "We need to provide a persuasive moral impact."

But many are perplexed as to how to do so. Harris encountered one powerful answer at a Family Research Council conference where he learned about Culture Impact Teams.

These are small groups formed by churches to provide Christians with training and guidance on how to reform and revitalize the culture.

A typical team has a team leader and includes:

- A strategist, who can also be the leader;
- A communicator, whose area includes social networking;
- A researcher, who can explore issues and stay abreast of the news of the day; and
- A mobilizer, who is "someone who knows how to inspire and encourage people to come together to impact the culture," Harris said.

The teams have four major functions:

1. To inform: They keep the pastor and the congregation in formed about issues facing the church, the community, our state, and our nation.
2. To educate: "The teams equip people to answer the question, 'What can we do?'" Harris said.
3. To alert the pastor and congregation: The teams need to alert churches about events and trends that require a response from believers. For instance, Harris said, in Charlotte people were largely unaware that the city council was considering an ordinance to allow transsexuals to go in any restroom they choose in places of public accommodation, including restaurants and stores. CITs have helped arouse opposition to the law. On March 3, the city council rejected the proposed ordinance.
4. To mobilize the church: The teams can work to turn out church members to attend school board meetings, town council meetings, and other public events.

Having people attend meetings can influence how officials vote, Harris said. "Elected officials often forget the promises they made in their campaign. But most of them can count."

Today's society does present a daunting prospect at times. But CITs can make a difference, he said. "They try to establish a positive point of view and show we are not helpless."

"We need a spiritual awakening," he said, adding that in history, "a spiritual awakening is often closely followed by cultural changes."

For example, the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century not only revived American churches, it also helped fuel the rise of abolitionism. Can such spiritual and political reform happen now?

There are now 170 CITs in the state, Harris said, and he believes they already had a significant effect on the November elections.

And the CIT movement is just beginning. "If there were five teams in every county, there would be 500 in North Carolina," Harris said.

So people of faith should be encouraged. "The reality is that God, in his graciousness, has given us freedom and established this great republic," Harris said. "If Christians will get involved, that would help provide for a real cultural awakening."

For more information on CITs, contact marti.tidwell@charlottefbc.org. ■

Mapping the Left: At the Core of NC Liberalism

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mer Soviet country of Turkmenistan. On his return to North Carolina, he started law school at the University of North Carolina in 1998 and began his active involvement in the work of left-wing nonprofits, inside and outside of North Carolina.

His first involvement was starting at the top as the executive director of the Fair Trial Initiative from 2000 to 2006. The Fair Trial Initiative is a nonprofit activist group established to continually introduce "innovative approaches to the defense of death penalty cases." Neal founded the group with, among others, Jonathan Soros, son of liberal billionaire George Soros, one of the wealthiest and most powerful liberal activists in history. Jonathan Soros is vice chairman and director of his father's multibillion-dollar Open Society Foundation, a linchpin of left-wing activism across the globe.



David Neal, with beard in upper right corner, looks on as William Barber speaks.

Neal also was a staff member for another nonprofit activist group, the Center for Death Penalty Litigation, from 2001 to 2003. The Center for Death Penalty Litigation is a law firm in Durham that provides representation for inmates on death row. Both the Fair Trial Initiative and the Center for Death Penalty Litigation are members of the Z. Smith Reynolds-established and -funded Blueprint NC.

In 2006, Neal entered the national scene with an appointment to the board of the Proteus Fund (2006-2012). "Discover the Networks" describes the Proteus Fund this way:

"Proteus is structured like a money-laundering firm. It provides cover for people who don't wish to be identified with the causes they support, either because the causes themselves are controversial, or because the donors wish to 'Astroturf' causes by presenting them as arising from broad-based public support, rather than the product of professional, funded activism."

In 2007, the State Strategies Fund, a project of Proteus, presented the "Report on Six Emerging Collaborative State Projects." The report hailed projects led by state activists who were attempting to build an integrated progressive infrastructure that would achieve comprehensive social change. North Carolina's contribution to the report was Blueprint NC.

Blueprint NC is the North Carolina nonprofit that gained infamy in 2013 for a leaked confidential strategy memo that instructed its members to "eviscerate" the state's leadership.

Left-leaning groups themselves claim Neal is a key player in creating Blueprint NC. The Southern Scan Research Project was backed by three liberal organizations, including the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation-funded Institute for Southern Studies. The project published a 2009 report, "Social Justice Organizing In the U.S. South," in which Neal is identified as the founder of Blueprint NC.

That is crucial because Blueprint NC is no ordinary liberal group. It is the central organizing and coordinating nexus for general coordination, lobbying and political activities among groups on the Left in the state.

Neal has served on an array of other liberal nonprofits, including the NC Conservation Network (Blueprint NC member), the Common Sense Foundation, and the Orange County ACLU.

Neal is no ordinary lawyer or heir to family money. He is the quintessence of a liberal activist, and he very much enjoys the access his family money and connections give him to politicians and activists. He has stated that he loves to go to Moral Monday protests. He also is sometimes prominently featured in photos of leaders on the Left holding press conferences or making pronouncements.

Neal is emblematic of how the heirs of a world-renowned industrialist have decided how to use the wealth he provided for them. They do this as a family and with the assistance of others on the board and the many nonprofits they have established and funded. Their connections and influence may be hard to trace at first, but Mapping the Left will show how they collaborate on turning North Carolina to the Left. ■

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Why Business Incentives Won't Help

BY GARLAND S. TUCKER III & FRANCIS X. DE LUCA

In previous years, Republicans rightly attacked then-Gov. Bev. Perdue's use of economic incentives to promote growth in North Carolina. Since taking control of the state, however, they have regrettably changed their tune. Gov. Pat McCrory and then-Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker last year urged a reluctant legislature to adopt a more aggressive incentives program, reciting Perdue's old plea of the importance of having "every tool in the toolbox" to entice major corporations to locate in the state.



Incentives lured Chiquita to Charlotte in 2011, now it plans to leave.

Incentives in the form of tax abatements and cash grants have been a part of North Carolina's economic development policy at the state and local level for years, but there are several sound reasons for abandoning this misguided policy.

First, contrary to popular thought, these incentives are rarely the deciding factor in development decisions. The most important factor in these decisions is generally geography. Based on the particular characteristics of the business, executives first pinpoint the area – i.e., the states – to which they will consider re-locating or investing. Clearly, this factor is not influenced by state policy but rather by the geographic requirements of each company.

Next, among the targeted states, there are several key aspects which will differentiate one state from another: quality of infrastructure, availability of skilled labor, educational system, tax levels, regulatory climate, and general quality of life – all of which state and local governments do control. Once these two factors – geography and overall economic quality of a state are addressed, then – and only then – do special economic incentives come into play. These incentive negotiations are often used merely as bargaining chips for the company to extract as much as possible from government in the actual desired location.

For as much attention as economic incentive programs receive, however, they are so small relative to the state's total economy their impact barely amounts to a rounding error. In 2013, North Carolina's Gross Domestic Product totaled more than $471 billion, which would have ranked as one of the top 30 economies in the world. Yet politicians and bureaucrats clamor that without incentives our state will wither and die. North Carolina consistently ranks high among states as an attractive place to do business when looking at the state's quality of infrastructure and education, business-friendly regulatory environment, relatively low taxes and quality of life – not at its incentive program.

Government incentive programs result in the misallocation of economic resources. Value creation only occurs if the investment is aligned with what the market wants. Government is not good at understanding markets and therefore makes incentive decisions for political reasons. These misallocated resources, however minimal, are no longer available for true value creation.

It makes far more economic sense for state government to concentrate on providing superior infrastructure and education at the lowest possible tax rates to all businesses. Then the market will determine the relative economic success of companies, rather than relying on state bureaucrats to ladle out benefits to a small number of businesses.

And a happy by-product of terminating incentives would be the elimination of those government jobs required to administer the incentive programs. The number of state, regional and local "economic developers" on the taxpayer's payroll is outsized compared to the infinitesimal impact incentives have on the state's economy.

Studies show the job creation benefits of incentives have been consistently overstated. Yearly reports show the incentives reporting a "promise" of creating thousands of jobs. But these promised jobs are over the course of several years, not in the year announced. When you compare this to an overall state economy that employs over 4.3 million people, you can see that while every job is important, spending hundreds of millions to create so few jobs is like digging a hole in the ocean.

"Government is not good at understanding markets and therefore makes incentive decisions for political reasons. These misallocated resources, however minimal, are no longer available for true value creation."

And these figures do not even take into account the failures. While everyone is smiles and handshakes at job announcements, these same politicians are scarcer when things don't turn out so well. In addition to spectacular North Carolina failures like Dell Computer and the looming Chiquita Banana move out of Charlotte, there are many smaller companies that pack up and leave or close down which don't make the news.

An investigation by WRAL-TV last fall found that only 38 percent of the nearly 40,000 promised jobs for incentivized investments between 2009 and 2012 have actually materialized, and that 127 incentivized projects in that time have failed to create even a single job out of more than 17,000 that were promised. Those failures represent misdirected and wasted resources which could have been directed better by the market than by politicians and bureaucrats.

While the overall impact of incentives is small on the state's total economy, the $266 million in incentives which were handed out by North Carolina in 2012-13 (latest available figures) represents a sizable misuse of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. This money, of course, comes out of the pockets of North Carolina families and businesses and, as stated earlier, are misallocated and not in line with the market and true value creation.

We urge Gov. McCrory to re-think his request to the legislature for corporate incentives. If North Carolina takes the bold step to end incentives, it will remain one of the largest economies in the world and will continue to grow. In fact, ending corporate welfare schemes would free up taxpayer money to do things like build infrastructure, improve education and maybe cut taxes. Now those are all things we all agree successful businesses look for when relocating and expanding.

Garland S. Tucker III is the CEO of Triangle Capital Corporation, a publicly traded company based in Raleigh, NC. Francis X. De Luca is the President of the Civitas Institute.

A version of this essay appeared in the News & Observer. ■

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Scandal

UNC Sports Scandal Keeps on Giving

BY BOB LUEBKE



The UNC scandal, like a bad headache, just won't go away. After three formal investigations and widespread media attention, new revelations continue to emerge despite efforts by university officials to put the embarrassing chapter behind them. Here's a quick update on recent happenings.

Recently Dan Kane, an investigative reporter for the News & Observer, revealed the UNC athletics scandal wasn't limited to undergraduate students. Kane chronicled the admission of athletes with sub-par academic records to graduate school as a means of extending athletic eligibility.

Kane discussed the case of Michael Waddell, a UNC football player in the early 2000s who had a low G.P.A., a low entrance exam score and had already missed the deadline to secure admission to graduate school.

Considering Waddell's unfavorable application, an athletic counselor's only chance for admission involved a trip to the Provost's Office.

John Blanchard, then the Senior Athletics Director, took up the case up with UNC Provost Robert Shelton. Shelton saw no way for Waddelll to be admitted to graduate school. But instead of telling Waddell the bad news, Shelton left the decision up to Linda Dykstra, the UNC graduate school dean at the time.

After pleading the case with the graduate school, graduate school admissions director Cheryl Thomas said Waddell should not be admitted and that individuals in the Exercise and Sports Science Department – the department where Waddell would be a graduate student – knew that Waddell was not there to pursue a legitimate course of study.

Ultimately, the N&O said, Waddell was admitted and played for the football team that year – but got four F's in the grad program and flunked out.

Sadly, these scenarios were not uncommon. Thomas said that during her eight years a director of admissions, at least once a year individuals from the Athletic Department or UNC administration would contact her for assistance with an athlete. Thomas was unwilling to admit unqualified athletes. Her stance put her at odds with her graduate school superiors. In 2010, Thomas retired after 22 years in her position.

The scenario highlights the pressure certain athletic and academic officials were able to exert on admissions officers. It also reveals an academic administration complicit in an ongoing scandal.

Kane's review showed academic administrators who looked the other way and graduate departments who bent the rules to admit athletes who often missed classes and skipped exams.

Admitting unqualified athletes to highly competitive graduate programs raises ethical and practical concerns. Is it right for UNC Chapel Hill to reject nearly two-thirds of all applicants and then admit an unqualified college athlete simply so he can be eligible to play a sport?

The findings have heightened scrutiny on an already investigation-weary UNC campus. NCAA rules specifically prohibit lowering admissions standards to graduate school so that athletes can obtain an additional year of eligibility. If it's found that UNC provided athletes with benefit or services that are not available to other students, the school could face additional penalties.

Meanwhile Mary Willingham, the woman at the center of the UNC athletics scandal reached a tentative settlement over her lawsuit alleging the university retaliated against her for exposing its role in an academic fraud scandal involving athletes and fake classes. A university-led investigation confirmed many of Willingham's allegations. Willingham contended some of the athletes placed in classes had sub-par academic skills.

Willingham sought to be reinstated to her former position. However, that provision was not part of the final settlement. No compensation figure was released.

Back on campus, a UNC Chapel Hill faculty group continues to advocate for reforms. The group recently released four major proposals to help address the current problems. They include:

1) Eliminate admission to athletic recruits whose predicted college grade-point average is below 2.3;

2) Integrate tutoring, advising and academic services for athletes into the services for the rest of the UNC student body;

3) Change the composition of the faculty athletics committee so the majority of faculty are from the College of Arts and Sciences, where most undergraduates are actually enrolled; and

4) Create a new faculty task force to review the implications of changes in college sports, including the increased autonomy of Big Five Athletic Conferences. All the proposals were referred to a faculty committee for further study.

The UNC scandal has been called many things, including an athletics scandal and an academic scandal. However, I agree with Anne Neal of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, who has suggested that what happened at UNC is a governance problem in which trustees have been marginalized to a point where most don't see it as their role to oversee the school's academic integrity. UNC, she wrote, "is an example of an institution that has lost its way and really seems to put reputation and revenues ahead of academic mission."

It a troubling of what can happen when an institution is blinded by the lure of big-time athletics. Let's hope common sense and real reform prevail before these scandals do further damage to the university. ■

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